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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [TH](#)
SUBJECT: OFFICIAL BIAS AND VOTER INDECISION

REF: A. BANGKOK 6007 (ARMY INTERFERENCE)
[1](#)B. BANGKOK 5914 (DISQUALIFICATIONS)
[1](#)C. BANGKOK 5881 (OATHS AND INSULTS)
[1](#)D. BANGKOK 5740 (CANDIDATE REGISTRATION)
[1](#)E. BANGKOK 5600 (MILITARY INTERFERENCE)

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (SBU) Coup leaders have reportedly claimed immunity from prosecution after an Election Commission of Thailand (ECT) panel concluded that the Council for National Security (CNS) was biased against the pro-Thaksin People's Power Party (PPP). The CNS plans to send a prominent coup leader to testify before the ECT on December 11 to respond to allegations that leaked CNS documents purportedly prove the military planned to "interfere in politics," although credible observers predict the ECT would ultimately acknowledge the "non-neutrality" of the CNS and urge it to cease political activity. A Democrat Party canvasser and minor party candidate were killed, although the murders do not appear politically motivated. The ECT asked a government ministry to ban a pro-Thaksin web site after it posted a video clip advocating the return of deposed PM Thaksin, while polls continue to predict a strong showing for the PPP, but with many voters still undecided. End summary.

ELECTION COMMISSION SUMMONS COUP LEADERS

[1](#)2. (U) After an Election Commission of Thailand (ECT) committee concluded that coup leaders in the Council for National Security (CNS) were "biased" against the pro-Thaksin People's Power Party (PPP) (reftel A), a senior CNS general reportedly wrote to the ECT to defend the coup leaders' actions. The press said that the CNS letter asked the ECT to cease its investigation into claims that leaked CNS documents (reftel E) allegedly prove the military planned to subvert the PPP. The CNS general argued the CNS is immune from prosecution under provisions in the new constitution.

[1](#)3. (SBU) On December 3, the ECT announced it had invited Air Chief Marshal and acting CNS Chairman Chalit Phukpasuk to testify on the matter before the commission. The CNS said it would send CNS Secretary General Winai Phatthiyakul instead to testify for the CNS. An ECT commissioner said the ECT

would issue a final ruling on the matter on December 12, although outspoken commissioner Sodsri Sattayatham publicly called for the ECT to refer the matter to the Constitutional Court. Media sources believed the ECT ruling would ultimately acknowledge the "non-neutrality" of the CNS and urge it to cease political activity ahead of Thailand's December 23 election, while also absolving the PPP of the need to prove the alleged incriminating CNS documents are authentic.

CANDIDATE KILLED

¶4. (SBU) On December 2, a minor party candidate was stabbed to death in a guesthouse in Prachuap Khiri Khan, south of Bangkok. The victim's wallet and car were stolen, and the police subsequently arrested an 18 year old woman who admitted to the killing, claiming that the deceased planned to rape her, so she blindfolded him during acts of foreplay, bludgeoned him with a hammer, and stabbed him repeatedly. Despite this scenario, a representative of the party told the press that he suspected a political motive. Also on December 2, a Democrat Party canvasser in Patthalung Province was reportedly killed by a gunman on a motorcycle in broad daylight. Police suspected the canvasser was killed as a result of a personal disagreement, although they said political motives could not be ruled out. (Comment: Being a canvasser is traditionally a dangerous business in Thailand, with 10 killed in the run up to the 2005 elections, and more than twice that many before the Parliamentary elections in 2000/2001. Then as now, it was not clear how many of these were politically motivated, and how many due to business or personal disputes. End comment.)

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MINISTRY ASKED TO BAN PRO-THAKSIN WEB SITE

¶5. (SBU) On December 6, the press reported that ECT Commissioner Sodsri would ask the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to shut down the pro-Thaksin web site hi-thaksin.net. The ECT claimed the web site causes "divides in society," as a recently posted video clip implied that a vote for the PPP would facilitate the return of deposed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. The ICT reportedly confirmed it would review the ECT request and would exercise its authority to close the web site if it breached election laws.

POLLS: PRO-THAKSIN PARTY IN THE LEAD

¶6. (SBU) Polling in advance of the December 23 elections continues to predict a plurality for the PPP and at least a 70% voter turnout, although many voters appear to still be undecided. A recent ABAC poll of approximately 10,000 voters in 33 provinces conducted between November 20 and December 5 found that 47% had yet to decide which party to support for 80 party list seats in the 480-seat House of Representatives. 39% indicated they had yet to decide which candidate to support for 400 constituency seats. The poll results indicated 73% would vote on election day, and that the PPP would win 39 of the party list seats. The poll also found that the Democrat Party would win 33 of these party list seats, while other parties would receive less support.

¶7. (SBU) A November 25 - 28 Daily News poll found that the PPP would win 181 total seats in the parliament, while the Democrat, Chart Thai and Motherland Parties would receive 132, 56, and 51 seats respectively. An anti-vote buying panel chaired by retired General and Deputy Prime Minister Sonthi Boonyaratglin reportedly conducted its own poll, which predicted a voter turnout of 71%. (Comment: Relatively few polling institutions in Thailand are considered to adhere to the highest standards of professionalism, and all poll

statistics should be considered with skepticism.
Nevertheless, our contacts unanimously agree with the current
conventional wisdom, consistent with the aforementioned
polls, that PPP will place first in the election, well ahead
of the Democrat Party. End comment.)
BOYCE